

Adult Learners' Week Awards Ceremony *See pages 16 & 17*



L-R: Philippa Forrester, former Robot Wars presenter; Corina Scanlan-Messam, Young Adult Learner of the Year and Vince Cable, Secretary of State for BIS Picture by Nick Linford

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Rob Wye ~ his story



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Campus Roundup



Students at Strode College show off their creative flair and more...

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Arrests over apprenticeship subcontractor

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Summers

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Serious Fraud Office swoop in on Luis Michael Training, former partner of Sparsholt College

Three men have been arrested as part of an investigation into Luis Michael Training (LMT), a sub-contractor that used to deliver football-based apprenticeships.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) says the individuals were arrested as part of a search operation on four homes and a business property.

A 29 year-old man was arrested in Southport, along with a 51 year-old man in Cardiff and a 52 year-old man in Heywood, Manchester.

All three men have since been interviewed and released without charge on unconditional bail.

The SFO says the search operation involved 52 of its investigators and

20 police officers from the Gwent, South Wales, Greater Manchester and Merseyside police forces.

LMT was a training provider which enrolled, assessed and verified apprenticeships for young people at football clubs such as Leeds, Millwall and Nottingham Forest.

The accusations against the sub-contractor, which was based in Newport and run by former Welsh football international Mark Aizlewood, relate to their work between 2009 and 2011.

An SFO statement reads: "It is believed that LMT fraudulently overstated the number of students and apprenticeships that they had placed. The suspected offences include

fraudulent trading, false accounting and forgery."

LMT, who worked as a sub-contractor for eight further education colleges including Sparsholt College and South Thames College, are suspected to have made fraudulent claims worth over £1.6 million.

The SFO statement adds: "It is suspected that LMT produced false documentation, including registration papers, progress reviews and coaching examination certificates to falsely show to further education colleges and examining boards that training and apprenticeship placements had been successfully achieved and completed."

A spokesperson for the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) told FE Week: "Although we don't hold the contractual relationships with Luis Michael Training we do have a duty to protect public funds and learners.

"Since 2010 we have worked with the lead provider who held the contractual relationship to ensure learners were supported and public funds not spent in accordance with the contractual arrangements that the lead provider has with the Agency have been clawed back."

Sparsholt College held the largest apprenticeship funding contract with LMT and said they were unable to make any comment which may preju-

dice the SFO investigation.

However, a spokesperson for the college told FE Week: "We have been proactive in reporting our concerns to the police and latterly working closely to support SFO enquiries."

Colleges which delivered training with LMT have been asked to give money back to the SFA.

When asked about Sparsholt College, the SFA spokesperson added: "The Agency has recovered funds from the lead provider.

"We cannot disclose the amount as it is confidential between us and the College.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request by FE Week has revealed that the SFA's Investigation Unit is currently handling 14 live allegations of misuse of funds.

However, only one of these is being considered by the police.



Learning materials to support short qualifications for learners aged 16-18











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SFA staff shortlisted for top job

Holly Welham
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Staff at the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) have been informed that three members of its executive team are in line to replace Geoff Russell as the chief executive.

FE Week understands that the shortlisted candidates are Verity Bullough, Kim Thorneywork and Marinos Paphitis.

Mr Russell announced his decision to step down in January, having informed the SFA in August last year. It came just a month after the Agency was stripped of its statutory post holder status by the government. He agreed to remain in his position until the end of July to oversee the restructuring of the Agency.

The executive director of capacity and infrastructure, Ms Bullough, joined the organisation in 2000. Previously she had been working as a senior adviser at the North London Training and Enterprise Council (NLTEC).

She has held a number of senior positions within the SFA, including national director of funding, planning and performance, and has worked in education since gaining a law degree from Oxford University.

Ms Thorneywork was recently promoted to be the executive director of delivery in May



Marinos Paphitis



Kim Thorneywork



Verity Bullough

2011 and leads its work on funding policy, investment and provider performance. She moved to the Agency to be the area director for Coventry and Warwickshire in 2006, after having worked as an inspector for Ofsted and a science teacher in Walsall.

When the SFA replaced the Learning and Skills Council in April 2010 she became the senior account director for the west midlands, with a portfolio of 33 FE colleges and over 160 training organisations.

The executive director for the south, Mr Paphitis, has responsibility for all aspects of stakeholder and provider relationships in the south of England. Additionally, he has been responsible for the Wiltshire, Swindon and Gloucestershire area, as well as Somerset. During his time in the south west, Mr Paphitis led the development and performance of apprenticeships. Prior to joining the SFA in

2001 he worked as a director of the National Contracts Service, which later became the National Employer Service.

His brother is Theo Paphitis, best known for his starring role on the BBC's *Dragons' Den*.

On the same day in January that Mr Russell made his announcement, Simon Waugh said he was stepping down as the chief executive of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and he left at the end of March.

When the story broke, Gordon Marsden, the shadow minister for FE, skills and regional growth, criticised the department for Business Innovation and Skills for not having found a successor for Mr Russell, despite him having informed the government a few months beforehand.

BIS said they are unable comment while the recruitment process is ongoing.

Bids worth £400 million for EO pilot

Nick Summers
@SummersNicholas

The government has received 269 bids worth roughly £400 million in the first round of the Employer Ownership pilot.

The proposals, worth roughly £400 million in total, are for projects which will deliver skills development and vocational training, such as apprenticeships, from August 2012 to the end of July 2014.

Skills minister John Hayes announced the bids last week and said the pilot will encourage "innovation and new thinking" from employers.

"The Government has put building workforce capabilities through training at the heart of our economic strategy," Mr Hayes said.

"But there's always more to do and because we know the skills system must be demand driven, we're determined to put employers in the driving seat."

He added: "With unprecedented focus and funding we'll match and beat competitor nations who have always valued vocational education."

"This pilot fund will give employers the space and opportunity for greater ownership of the vocational skills agenda, encouraging innovation and new thinking as we provide the platform for sustainable growth."

The scheme, developed in partnership with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), is offering up to £250 million of direct government funding over the next two years.

The first round of provision, worth up to £50 million for 2012/13, is offering small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) a minimum investment of £250,000 for each approved project.

Large employers, or those bidding as part of a consortium, will receive at least £1 million in comparison.

Charlie Mayfield, chairman of the UKCES and the John Lewis Partnership, said: "The pilots are all about encouraging innovation and partnership in an area that is critical to the growth and success of our economy."

"I look forward to seeing what changes we can start to make as a result of these investments."

The UKCES say they will make an announcement about the timing of round two "in the coming months", following an evaluation of the bids submitted in the first round.

The non-departmental public body, which provides strategic leadership on skills and employment issues, says there has been "a good spread of bids" from across the country, with a significant amount submitted by SMEs and from across different sectors.

A prospectus published by UKCES in March says they are looking for proposals which will increase the number of people taking part in training and also achieving qualifications.

It reads: "For employers, the pilot offers greater flexibility to improve programme design, to deliver training and employment opportunities that have real value in the labour market, and to demonstrate how accountability for public funds can be made as simple as possible."

"It promotes employee engagement and collaboration between employers to create training and employment opportunities that achieve joint goals."

The UKCES say they expect apprenticeships to be "a central part of projects that we take forward", as well as training which directly targets 16 to 18 year-olds.

FE Week news in brief

A4e gets the all clear

The SFA has finished auditing A4e and found no evidence of fraud with their prison contract.

"The Agency now has adequate assurance on current and potential future contracts with A4e," an SFA statement reads.

"As with all of our suppliers, we will be vigilant and use all of our oversight and audit processes to maintain assurance that public funds and learners' interests are safeguarded."

A Little help for LLDs

Adult apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) should be fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), according to a new report commissioned by the Apprenticeships Unit.

Peter Little OBE, the author of the report, says the SFA should incentivise providers to recruit more young people with LDD by making apprentices aged 19 to 24 fully funded.

"It must be recognised that ultimately employers must be encouraged to consider the positive merits of recruiting disabled apprentices," the report states.

Community Learning

Proposals for the new Community Learning Trusts pilot must be submitted by this Friday.

The scheme is designed to maximise access to community learning for adults and will focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate.

Proposals should be submitted online by community learning providers to the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

FE loans met with “widespread dismay”

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Only one in ten adults say they would “definitely” take out a loan to study a level 3 course in FE, according to research commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The study, carried out by the social research agency TNS BMRB, found that 42 per cent of respondents would be unlikely to take out a “24+ Advanced Learning Loan” in the next two or three years.

The findings add to growing concerns about the impact of the new policy, which will affect all learners aged 24 or above and studying at level 3 or higher in the 2013/14 academic year.

Gordon Marsden MP, shadow minister for FE, skills and regional growth, told *FE Week*: “There were some statistics in this that were very disturbing in terms of what they indicate about the resistance to taking up loans.”

Toni Pearce, vice-president (FE) for the National Union of Students (NUS), added: “It

would be a national tragedy if those who have been shut out of education in the past were even further deterred from taking up life-changing routes to learning by the creation of new financial barriers.”

A report published by the Department says TNS BMRB surveyed 405 potential learners, aged between 23 and 64, who completed a full level 2 course in the 2010/11 academic year.

One in ten respondents (12 per cent) who declared they would be progressing to a level 3 course in the next two or three years said they would “definitely” take out a loan, while a further 21 per cent said they “probably” would.

John Hayes MP, minister of state for FE, skills and lifelong learning, told *FE Week*: “I thought the research was helpful and encouraging - I wouldn’t go too far with this - but encouraging, and provided a useful platform for us to gauge how we now move forward.”

He added: “The interesting thing about the (research) was that there was less fear, ultimately, about loans than some might have claimed.

“Clearly most people said they would con-

tinue with their learning and they would take loans as part of the package.”

However, more than 40 per cent of respondents who wanted to study a level 3 qualification in the next two or three years said they either “definitely” or “probably” wouldn’t take out a loan.

Jon Richards, the national secretary for education at Unison, said: “The government must now stop and listen, otherwise it risks inflicting chaos on the further education sector.

“Many learners are going to be priced out of education and skills altogether.

“Ministers should therefore call an immediate halt to their ill-thought out fees policy.”

The research was commissioned by BIS to find out how learners would react to the new FE loans policy, as well as how best to ensure its impact “on learners’ choices and options is minimised”.

The study, which also included group debates with more than 200 people, found that most potential learners met the idea of an FE loan with “widespread dismay”.

The report states: “(It was) common for respondents to feel that the emotional and financial costs of a loan would outweigh the uncertain and in all likelihood deferred benefits of FE, and suggested that they would have to reconsider taking a course on this basis.”

It later adds: “Only a small minority of ‘career advancers’ did not immediately reject the idea, as they felt their course was their only way forward for their chosen career, so were unwilling to consider alternatives to FE and abandon their plans.”

However, the research by TNS BMRB also found that learners were more supportive of the policy when they were provided with further information.

“When the facts around the link between income and repayment are communicated clearly and immediately, that repayments are low and affordable and that this is a loan from government and not a bank, this research suggests the reaction was much more positive and the impact on course take-up would be greatly reduced,” the report states.

Short apprenticeships offer “no real benefit,” say MPs

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Apprenticeships delivered in six months or less offer “no real benefit” to learners or employers, according to a report published by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Margaret Hodge MP, who chaired the panel, says she is concerned that roughly one in five apprenticeships (19 per cent) were delivered in six months or less during 2010/11.

“The danger is that apprenticeships lasting such a short time are of no real benefit to either the individuals who take part or employers and could devalue the programme,” Ms Hodge said.

“I am pleased therefore that the skills minister announced recently that adult apprenticeships will last a minimum of six months and normally at least 12 months.”

However, the growth in adult apprenticeships has been branded a “success” by the PAC.

The panel of backbench MPs says the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) “has done very well” to more than quadruple the number of adult apprentices in the four years leading up to 2010/11.

“We recognise the significant achievement of the Department and its partners in raising both the number of adult apprentices and the percentage who successfully complete their apprenticeship,” the report reads.

The report later suggests that the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) could be overpaying private training providers due to “out-of-date” funding rates.

“The Service does not know what level of profits providers are making on different types of apprenticeships,” the report reads.

“Nor does it know whether it is subsidising some apprenticeships more than others.”

It later adds: “There is also evidence to sug-

gest some providers are providing training without receiving the expected contribution from employers.

“The Service should work closely with the Agency to link the funding it provides more closely with the delivery costs.”

Ms Hodge said: “If the Service is to get better at targeting of resources, it needs to understand better which apprenticeships in which sectors deliver the best value for money.

“It doesn’t currently know what levels of profit the providers are making and whether it is paying them too much for some types of apprenticeship.”

The PAC report also calls for a structural review of the NAS and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to ensure there is “minimal duplication” in their responsibilities.

“The relationship between the NAS and SFA remains unclear,” the report reads.

“The way in which the two bodies interact, and the question of who is responsible and accountable for what, still needs to be clarified.

“This will be particularly important to settle during 2012, given the Department needs to appoint new permanent chief executives in each body.”

The skills minister, speaking at an evidence session held by the BIS Select Committee for their inquiry into apprenticeships last week, admitted there was “an argument for changing the way the SFA is structured.”

“No government gets all these things right and I remember when we were in opposition looking at the SFA and the NAS, talking about whether that was the right structure and whether the existing arrangements with the SFA, where it’s an external body - not a permanent body - was right,” Mr Hayes told the Committee.

“I’ve increasingly come to the view that we need to bring that more in-house...and we’re looking very closely at that now.”



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FE Week investigates

FE Minister gets the final word

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The skills minister has been scrutinised by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee in the last evidence session of their inquiry into apprenticeships.

John Hayes MP, speaking in Westminster last week, was quick to defend the rapid expansion in new apprentices aged 25 and above, as well as the apprenticeship scheme delivered by Elmfield Training at Morrisons.

"Unless we up skill and re-skill the existing workforce - the people over 25 - we simply won't catch up with our competitors," Mr Hayes said.

"I chose to make apprenticeships the vehicle to do that."

He added: "But I do think that there would be an issue if that displaced younger apprentices."

"There's been a 12.8 per cent growth in under 19 apprenticeships, there's been a 69.3 per cent growth in 19 to 24 apprenticeships, so while it's true that 25 apprenticeships have grown most, they've done so from a low base, and not at the expense of growth in other areas."

"If that were to happen, I would have concerns."

The BIS Select Committee were quick to question Mr Hayes about whether the increase in adult apprentices could be attributed to existing employees.

The skills minister replied: "The overwhelming majority of 25+ apprenticeships are already employed, but I simply strike this warning note on that - the real issue is how many are employed for how long."

"So if people were employed for a year or two years, they were new employees and the training was part of their induction with the skills necessary to do their job."

"That would be rather different to those who have been with a company for a very long time and were looking to use an apprenticeship to up skill."

He added: "Both are legitimate, but they're also rather different."

The skills minister also defended the new 12 month minimum duration for all apprenticeships, due to be implemented in August, as a measure to improve additionality and remove unnecessary 'dead-weight'.

"If I felt that apprenticeships were merely being used to accredit existing competencies, then I would be concerned," Mr Hayes told the Committee.

"I think it's absolutely right that apprenticeships, whoever does them, add to skills and that's partly about the rigor of the system and one of the reasons why I extended the time for adult apprentices."

He added: "A lot of people think I've been too tough on this...some of the learning providers said 'well there's been so much prior attainment amongst older people, there will be so much greater employability skills then there might be for a 16 year-old, so these



Adrian Bailey MP, chair of the BIS Select Committee

apprenticeships can be completed in a shorter time'.

"But I actually insisted and I resisted that argument in order to ensure that what was taught and tested was meaningful and ad-

"If I felt that apprenticeships were merely being used to accredit existing competencies, then I would be concerned"

ditional."

Ann McKechin, MP for Glasgow North and a member of the BIS Select Committee, questioned Mr Hayes at length about the apprenticeship scheme delivered by Elmfield Training at Morrisons.

She said: "Morrisons is one of our major retailers with a turnover of over £1 billion a year - or probably much in excess of that - so I think the taxpayer is going to ask why shouldn't Morrisons be paying for this?"

However, Mr Hayes defended the scheme resolutely and said it had "a number of things to recommend it".

"Morrisons has employed 49,500 people since 2009 (who were) extra people or new people," he said.

"Fifty per cent of them were previously unemployed, 50 per cent had no level 2 qualification, and 25 per cent had no qualification at all - many of those are now being put on apprenticeships."

"Eighty-four per cent of the Morrisons apprentices have numeracy and literacy prob-



John Hayes, minister for FE and Gila Sacks, deputy director, Apprenticeships Unit, BIS giving evidence

lems - all of which are being tackled by their apprenticeship program, given as I said every apprenticeship must head towards a GCSE equivalent in maths and english."

The skills minister later added that he didn't want to be associated with a view that Morrisons apprenticeships "are not adding value".

Ann McKechin followed up her question by asking the minister how the government valued benefits made 'in-kind' by employers.

"My concern is when we took evidence from NAS, and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), they said they had no criteria for assessing benefits in-kind," she said.

"They had no guidance of which they issued about how to value benefit in-kind, and yet employers are, if the employee is over 19, supposed to contribute a significant share, either in cash or benefit in-kind."

The minister said his Department had research relating to the issue which they would be happy to provide the Committee at a later date.

"Of course people who supply goods and services to government make profits"

Ann McKechin also questioned the skills minister about the significant profits taken by Elmfield Training, one of the providers which delivers apprenticeships at Morrisons.

Mr Hayes replied: "If government took the

view that none of the organisations in which it deals or collaborated to deliver public programmes, should not make profits, my goodness we would have to close down a great deal of what any government has ever done."

"So of course people who supply goods and services to government make profits."

"That is the nature of the relationship between the public and the private sector."

Mr Hayes also told the Committee that while the apprenticeship programme was filling "a much bigger footprint" than before, other types of vocational training shouldn't be forgotten.

"I think there is a case for other work based training apart from apprenticeships," he said.

"Of course as long as that training is meaningful and rigorous, it deserves its place in the sun too."

"Much of what FE colleges do, much of what businesses do, exists outside the apprenticeship framework."

The minister suggested that more employers, particularly SMEs and medium-sized businesses, could be brought into the apprenticeship programme.

Mr Hayes said the first step was to ensure "that the apprenticeship frameworks match real commercial need", and were created in a way that reflected the interests of employers.

The second step, he said, was to engage them through schemes such as the new Employer Ownership pilot, which is offering firms direct funding from a 'pot' worth up to £250 million.

"We said to employers, we want you to get involved in shaping the skills system," Mr Hayes said.

"We've just had the responses to that invitation...employers working with education providers to look at how they can shape apprenticeships, as well as new and fresh ways to match their needs."

FE Week profile

Rob Wye ~ his story

Janet Murray

@jan_murray

The chief executive of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service talks to *FE Week*

One of Rob Wye's earliest memories is living through a typhoon in Hong Kong. "We sat on a rolled-up carpet in the living room as the water just poured in through the windows as the water just rose on the floor," he recalls. "We all thought we were going to die." He was just six at the time.

But Wye has many fond memories of the Far East, where he spent the early part of his childhood – in Hong Kong, and later, in Singapore – due to his father's job as an architect. He speaks warmly of "the street markets, the peat railway and the shouting and the smells," of Hong Kong and of holidays in Malaya, where he saw "crocodiles, lizards and monkeys and all sorts of exciting things."

The family returned to the UK, when Wye was 11, settling in Slough, where he attended the local grammar school and was, by his own admission, a bit of a swot who "liked to pick up O levels," – so much so, he got 14, including Russian and Greek.

Towards the end of his law degree at Cambridge, Wye – now chief executive at LSIS - took advice from a university careers advisor, who suggested graduate entry to the civil service or the police. As he didn't fancy "trampling the beat" for three years, he chose the former and was placed in the employment service, working on regional policy.

In what he describes as "a great first job," he soon found himself advising ministers on funding, and counts one of his biggest achievements as persuading the government to inject additional cash into deprived coastal areas like Hastings and Margate.

After a brief stint in the Health and Safety Executive, Wye spent three years working for Kenneth Barnes, then permanent secretary of the Department of Employment before being redeployed – rather suddenly - to the Manpower Services Commission in Sheffield.

He recalls: "It was Christmas Eve in 1981, my wife had just had a baby and the head of the HR department came to see me and said, 'If you want to get promoted, you'll need to go to Sheffield.' I said, 'Alright then, when do I start?' and he said, 'January 2nd.' So I had between Christmas Eve and New Year to get everything sorted to go up to Sheffield."

As it turned out, it was one of the best moves he ever made. Wye loved Sheffield, which he describes as "one great big village" full of families who had moved up there with the civil service. And he enjoyed working at the MSC, where – amongst others things

- he undertook a review of the skills sector. "It was a great organisation...one of those where you were given huge amounts of responsibility at a young age and told to just get on with things."

When the MSC was abolished in 1988, he went back into the employment service, working first in training, where he says his job was about "making a nuisance of himself" by reminding the education department about the existence of vocational education and trying to persuade civil servants there "that actually they were training for employment as much as they were for higher education."

In the latter days of the Conservative government, Wye was tasked with bringing business, industry and education together to resurrect apprenticeships. But persuading the Labour government that followed of their worth proved challenging.

"We hit the election in 1997 and the incoming Labour administration - because they hadn't invented apprenticeships - were saying: 'We don't like these. We don't think these are appropriate.' I managed to persuade ministers that actually, no, this is exactly what they talked about in their manifesto. So we managed to get them [apprenticeships] to become bipartisan, so I am very pleased that happened. It was a [political] football for such a long time but now you won't find a party arguing against it. It's brought up in every single speech now, isn't it? You get Clegg, Cameron, Miliband, all talking about apprenticeships."

"The incoming Labour administration - because they hadn't invented apprenticeships - were saying: 'We don't like these. We don't think these are appropriate'"

After a three-year stint in central finance, Wye moved to the newly created Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in 2000, as regional director for Northampton. He was later promoted to a national role, as director of strategy and communications, working for Mark Haysom, who later stepped down from the chief executive role after the college's rebuilding programme ran into difficulties. "It was an absolutely brilliant job because it put you at the centre of that enormous machine, effectively operating as Mark's number 2 and helping to redesign the system, managing the politics with the department, and managing relationships with the press, which is something that was previously not allowed."

But in a time when the LSC was under close press scrutiny, getting into the office early on a Friday to check the TES became a

Picture by Nick Linford



ritual, he says. And while there were many fallings out with the sector's trade paper, there was also lots of making up – including one incident which led to a public apology from the TES, something he jokes made him feel "very proud" at the time.

When the LSC was dismantled in 2010, Wye applied for the job of one of the two newly created organisations - the Young Peoples' Learning Agency (YPLA), but lost out to Peter Lauener (who he had worked with at the MSC), which he admits was "disappointing."

Getting the top job at LSIS (which he had applied for twice before in its previous incarnation as the Quality Improvement Agency) more than made up for that though.

"What appealed about the role was the chance to make a difference, both to learners and society as a whole.

"Everything we do has to be designed to have an impact on making the sector better," he says.

"Why does that matter? Well, because the sector makes things better for individuals and for the economy. There is a much more immediate link between what we do and what happens out there."

But there are big challenges ahead, he says, and not least for colleges who are currently adjusting to a brave new world of "a great

deal more freedom at a time of a great deal less money," says Wye.

And the introduction of FE Loans, which will mean some over 24s have to take out government loans to cover the cost of A-level equivalent courses, will force colleges to think far more entrepreneurially, he says.

"Operating in a world where you have to persuade people to take a loan out in order to come and do a level 3 or level 4 course at college... that's a very different proposition from what we have got at the moment and colleges will need to get into a very different mind-set."

If there is one thing Wye hopes he has achieved in his 35 year career in the sector, it has been helping to put vocational learning on the map. But he is quick to point out that there is still a long way to go.

"Making a reality of this, so that full range of opportunities and offers are available for young people, along with the appropriate advice and guidance to help them make the right choices is what motivates me.

"If I can help in any way to make that a reality, so that by the time my grandchildren get to that age it is just a natural choice whether they pursue an academic or a vocational route - and they are of equal status and equal standing - that would be tremendous."

FE Week Experts

The government and sector are ill-prepared for FE loans



William Hague's recent exhortation for people to stop whinging and 'work harder' reminded me of a certain Conservative politician from the 1980s who famously told people to 'to get on their bike' and look for work.

The current economic picture bears many resemblances to the heyday of Norman Tebbit; high unemployment, especially among young people, stagnated growth and above all a government out-of-touch with the challenges facing ordinary people.

What after all is the use in asking people to 'get on their bike' and 'work harder' if at the same time you are restricting their ability to access training and find work?

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in further education where the government has announced plans to make learners over the age of 24, who wish to study for qualifications at A-Level equivalent or above, pay the full cost of their tuition by taking out a loan like students do in higher education.

The government is making an unfortunate habit of not listening to expert advice in key policy areas, but it would be well-advised to study its own research in this area.

Last week it was revealed that just one in 10 people aged 24 and over would definitely undertake a further education course at college if the controversial plans to charge loans are brought in.

The new system, which is scheduled to be introduced from 2013/14, has already succeeded in uniting the sector against it.

A survey conducted by *FE Week* earlier

this month showed that over two-thirds of students, college leaders and staff think ministers should urgently pause or look at abandoning the scheme altogether.

They rightly warn that the sector is ill-prepared for these radical changes and that little thought has been given to the impact that loans will have on students, especially women and those from poorer backgrounds and with learning difficulties.

There are also serious concerns over whether the Student Loans Company (SLC) has been given sufficient time to develop the administration of the loans system.

University students not receiving their loans on time are now as much part of the education calendar as pictures of A-level students leaping for joy in August.

So will the government listen to the experts or we are in for another NHS-style PR disaster? So far the signs aren't looking positive.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) claim that introducing loans will mean that thousands of people "can access learning at a time when grant funding is being prioritised on those who need it most."

"What is the use in asking people to 'get on their bike' and 'work harder' if at the same time you are restricting their ability to access training and find work?"

This doesn't exactly inspire confidence or address the basic question of how people can access learning if they are unable to afford it? The reality of the new system means that learners will have to pay thousands to study.

No matter how much William Hague exhorts people to work harder, it is simply not easy when you face record unemployment and the opportunities to get back into education are being removed or made too expensive.

It is the government that needs to work harder. It needs to give people access to the skills and jobs they need and provide the growth the country needs to start to recover.

Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union (UCU)

Who will foot the bill for health and care training?

The UK faces unprecedented demands for expert health and social care workers in every area from childcare to support for an aging population beset by problems such as poverty, isolation, immobility and dementia. From cradle to grave, we need skilled workers and managers fast, we need them trained on the job, and we need considerable support from further education colleges and other training providers.

Against a background of scandals in care homes, the government is looking at leadership across the variety of fields – raising quality and raising public trust in organisations that provide health and care. Leadership qualifications already exist in schools and children's centres. By implication they are now needed more in health and care settings.

Leadership is not just about the person at the top; it is important to inspire leadership within teams and build that up into organisational leadership. While such skills may be transferable, you also need knowledge and understanding of the sector you are working in. Therefore, we must draw leaders from within the sector, nurture them, encourage them, train them – make sure they are qualified.

The issue was emphasised recently in Professor Cathy Nutbrown's interim review of Early Years qualifications – the need is not only for new entrants but for the current workforce to take further qualifications to improve their skills and career prospects. Evidence, she says, shows that "well qualified, experienced leadership is key to driving up quality of provision, and also that less experienced staff will benefit from good, thorough support and supervision. It is also key in safeguarding children."

I'm passionate about the fact that qualifications help people to reflect on their practice and to create measures for themselves regarding quality. If they internalise concepts of quality, they don't need such close supervision as they work more effectively and independently within an agreed standard of values. At CACHE, with this approach in mind, we provide children and adult care sectors with a unique portfolio of qualifications ranging from Entry to Level 5 and last year we registered over 150,000 learners.

It is crucial that we send people into the workplace with qualifications that count. For the employer such investment shows you aspire to a high-quality workforce and you set higher expectations than the level 3 qualification. Level 5 shows you take very seriously the quality assurance issue. Qualifications are important as a badge of quality and if I was commissioning care services, that is one of the things I would look for. It is after all about putting customers first.

But, as local authorities and others struggle



to find new savings of £1bn from social care budgets, and inspectors report a decline of 650 registered nurseries and childminders in the first quarter of this year alone, where are the people and the resources to be found? Only by raising the status of the profession and improving public trust in what we provide will we attract and retain a workforce committed to the necessary constant self improvement.

There's been a long-stranding culture where people have always expected that the employer will fund key pieces of development. The world is very different now and we have to think about how we use the resources we have – whether it's about buying things, articles, consumer goods or about buying "opportunities".

In these days employers can't afford to meet all the costs of qualifications. So individuals may need to look more to their own resources and maybe seek loans. People might fear this but it puts them in control of their own development. They don't have to ask anyone's permission to do it; they are in a position to invest in their own future. Also the employers depend on having the edge about what they can offer and what they can show, so they will be looking for top quality staff and managers.

A survey by *FE Week* recently revealed considerable concern over the developing FE loans scheme, with two-thirds of those surveyed calling for it to be delayed or even abandoned. We have long seen a joint commitment of employers and employees paying a share in therapeutic services. And we have seen that where people invest in their own well being, it gives them a commitment to succeed.

I hope people will really think about ways to invest in their own development. It's a big challenge: if people are better qualified, they will expect better remuneration. And quite right too; we need jobs very well done, not just well done.

Vicki Lant, chair of the Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE)

FE Week Experts

Here's a little bit of advice and guidance



With rising youth unemployment, continuing recession, a bewildering range of career pathways and the introduction of FE loans there has never been a time when it has been more important for young people to have access to high quality, impartial careers information and guidance (CIAG). Yet the last two years have seen massive funding cuts and a period of great uncertainty as Connexions was dismantled.

The Government's stated ambition for careers guidance is to ensure every young person has access to the independent and impartial support that they need. Its strategy to achieve this has been by legislating in the Education Act

2011 to place a new duty on schools to secure independent careers guidance for pupils in years 9-11 from this September, with a consultation currently underway on extending this duty to young people up to age 18.

ASCL, along with many other organisations, was hugely disappointed when it was announced that the replacement to Connexions, the new National Careers Service, would offer young people only a telephone service and a website.

This means that it is left to schools and colleges to procure face to face guidance from an open and largely unregulated market. The Careers Profession Alliance (an umbrella organisation of careers professionals) has worked hard to put in place standards and qualifications for all careers practitioners together with a national register. However, the fact of the matter is that there is a massive variability in the quality of provision.

With national policies that promote competition between institutions, it is easy to be drawn into unhelpful accusations of self-interest. However, it is in everyone's interest, not least our young people's, to get this right.

Improving CIAG is not going to happen through legislation, close inspection by Ofsted or the

proposed new destination measure. The reality is that the key to a sustainable solution lies with the leaders of our schools and colleges.

We need to sit down together, learn from the best practice in each sector and engage in honest and frank debate about how we put the needs of the young people in our communities first. In doing so, some will have to face up to the elephants in the room, such as:

- A funding system in schools and colleges which encourages institutions to maximise their intake.
- The existence of competition between schools and colleges and between different FE institutions.
- The creation of additional provision such as UTCs, post 16 free schools and studio schools in areas where there are already surplus places.
- Cases where students in schools are not given access to full information about local provision.
- Aggressive marketing by some colleges.

ASCL and AoC have produced a briefing and statement of good practice which we hope will form the basis for discussion between schools and colleges (www.ascl.org.uk/resources/library/ascl_aoc_joint_paper).

We strongly believe that schools and colleges have a responsibility to ensure that

all pupils and students have access to timely, well-informed and impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Young people need to know about all pathways available to them and there are plenty of examples of best practice which can be emulated.

FE colleges have vast experience of providing CIAG. Too often communication between staff within the FE and school sectors is very limited. We would urge staff working in colleges and work-based learning providers to visit schools and host visits from school careers staff. In return we would expect schools to support their careers staff to attend these information sessions.

Likewise, schools should pass on information about students' progress and attainment to date and any support needs they have. Colleges and work-based learning providers should share information with schools on the progress, achievements and subsequent destinations of their former pupils.

It is time for the leaders of schools and colleges to sit down together and learn from each other in the interests of all of our communities. For our young people, it is the right thing to do.

Brian Lightman, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders

T R I B A L

Learning materials to support short qualifications for learners aged 16–18

Tribal publishes a range of student workbooks and assessment materials that are ideal for learners aged 16–18. All of our materials are officially endorsed by the relevant awarding organisations and can be delivered flexibly via independent learning or as part of classroom-based delivery. We also provide centres with comprehensive assessor marking guides to support each qualification. All of the qualifications listed below are on the QCF and are fundable to learners aged 16–18.

Examples of the short programmes on offer include:

- Level 1 Award in Substance Misuse Awareness (13glh)
- Level 1 Award in Mental Health Awareness (24glh)
- Level 1 Award in Personal Money Management (30glh)
- Level 1 Award in Sustainable Development (40glh)
- Level 2 Award in Equality and Diversity (60glh)

We can also offer a range of longer programmes, across a variety of subject areas.

For more information, email publishing@tribalgroup.com or call us on 01904 550110.

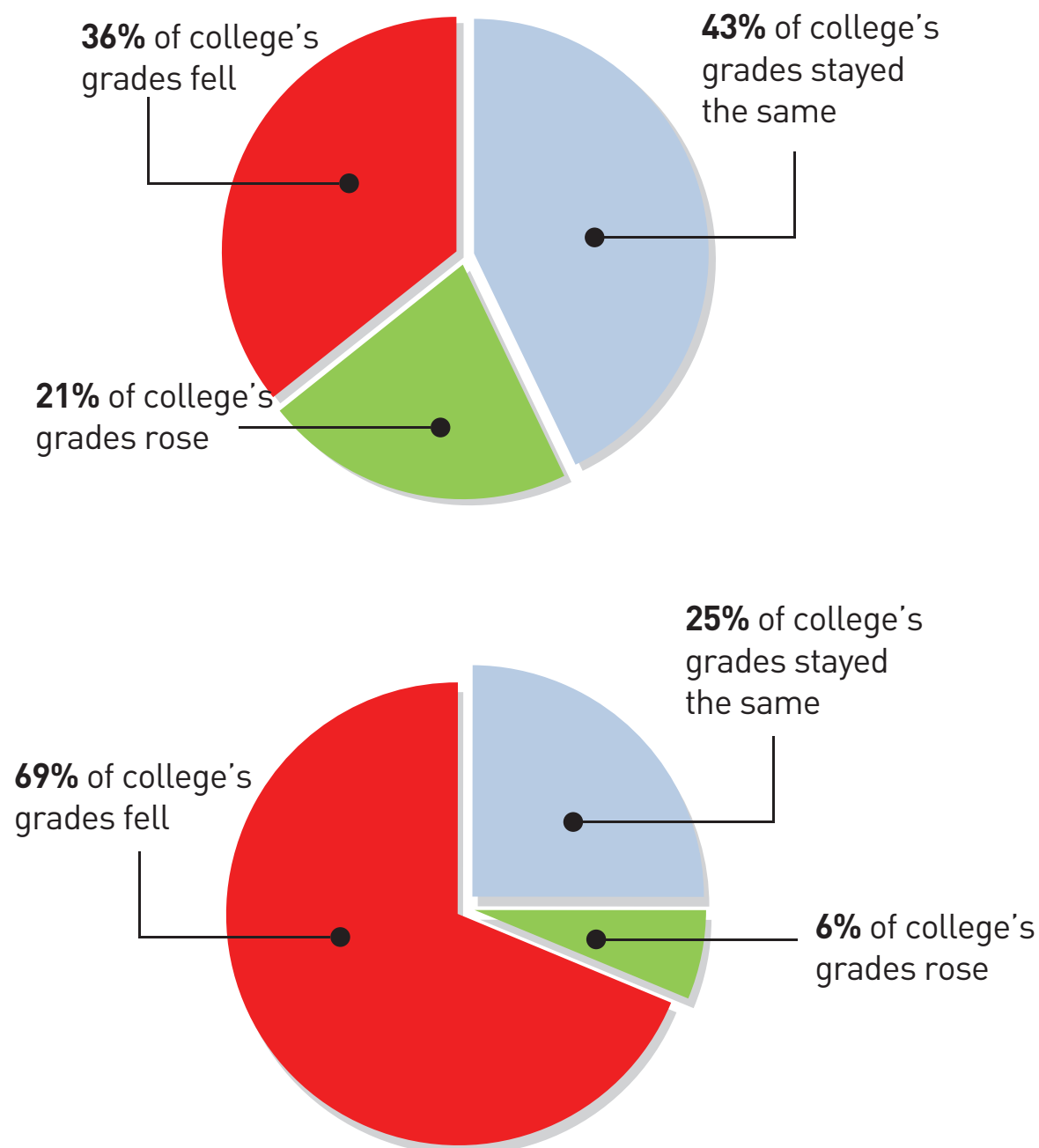
www.tribalgroup.com/publishing



FE Week gets technical ~ Ofsted grades v2

FE Week has updated analysis of college Ofsted grades since October 2011, to include Derby College, Petroc and Derwentside College.

The figures below show the majority of colleges inspected have seen their grade fall, particularly since the start of 2012.



October 2011 - December 2011

14 college inspections
Average Ofsted ratings fell by

0.07 of a grade



and 2012

January 2012 - March 2012

16 college inspections
Average Ofsted ratings fell by

1.00 of a grade

Matthew Coffey, Director at Ofsted, responds to FE Week analysis



I read with interest the article in FE week on a sample of colleges from the 157 group and their inspection judgements.

The first, and most important, point to make is that the inspection framework (CIF) has not changed. The article sug-

gests that a new common inspection framework was introduced in September 2011. It wasn't. We are introducing a new CIF in September 2012. Our final public consultation on the new framework has just closed and we are planning to publish it at the end of the month.

It may of course be entirely correct that colleges are being inspected for the first time under the 2009 framework. I also accept that our approach to the selection of providers for inspection has changed since 2009.

In 2009/10 around a quarter of providers were selected for inspection based on our published risk assessment process.

This increased to around half of provid-

ers in 2010/11 but excluded outstanding providers.

"Selected analysis over a short timeframe will not give a fair representation of the state of the nation"

This year we have maintained the selection ratio although outstanding providers have also been assessed, and indeed some have been selected for inspection.

The consequence of this proportionate approach to inspection must not be underestimated. Selected analysis over a short timeframe will not give a fair representation of the state of the nation.

However, this should not detract from the key messages coming out of inspections at the moment. Teaching and learning continues to be a key issue as does the rigor of self-assessment.

I won't attempt to write an annual report in this space but instead direct you to our quarterly published data which can be found on our website.

Individual published inspection reports explain the evidence behind our grades. Reports also contain details on how providers can improve.

College	Inspection Grade since Oct 11	Inspection date	Previous inspection grade	Inspection date	Total increase or decrease
Derby College	3	30-Mar-12	2	16-Nov-07	-1
Petroc	2	19-Mar-12	1	09-Oct-07	-1
Derwentside College	2	19-Mar-12	2	22-Sep-08	0
Great Yarmouth College	3	16-Mar-12	4	12-Nov-10	1
North Warwickshire & Hinckley College	2	16-Mar-12	1	29-Oct-07	-1
Kensington & Chelsea College	3	09-Mar-12	2	26-Feb-07	-1
Stratford-upon-Avon College	3	02-Mar-12	2	05-Mar-07	-1
Lewisham College	3	02-Mar-12	1	24-Apr-06	-2
City of Wolverhampton College	4	20-Feb-12	2	10-Dec-07	-2
Lambeth College	4	20-Feb-12	2	25-Feb-08	-2
Macclesfield College	4	20-Feb-12	1	25-Sep-06	-3
Knowsley Community College	4	06-Feb-12	2	25-Feb-08	-2
Brooklands College	3	06-Feb-12	3	05-Oct-09	0
Canterbury College	3	30-Jan-12	3	01-Oct-07	0
South Essex College of Further and Higher Education	3	30-Jan-12	2	12-May-08	-1
Wiltshire College	3	16-Jan-12	3	08-Oct-07	0
Peterborough Regional College	2	12-Dec-11	3	14-Apr-08	1
Southwark College	4	05-Dec-11	3	15-Mar-10	-1
K-College	3	05-Dec-11	2	27-Feb-06	-1
Askham Bryan College	2	05-Dec-11	3	01-Oct-07	1
Burton and South Derbyshire College	2	05-Dec-11	2	26-Nov-07	0
Henshaws College	2	22-Nov-11	2	21-Mar-06	0
Sussex Coast College Hastings	4	21-Nov-11	3	12-May-08	-1
Stephenson College	3	21-Nov-11	2	04-Dec-06	-1
Bishop Auckland College	2	21-Nov-11	2	26-Nov-07	0
Plumpton College	2	21-Nov-11	2	04-Jun-07	0
Kidderminster	3	14-Nov-11	2	30-Mar-09	-1
Farnborough College of Technology	1	14-Nov-11	3	26-Nov-07	2
Central Bedfordshire College (Formerly Dunstable College)	3	07-Nov-11	3	28-Apr-08	0
Shrewsbury College	3	31-Oct-11	3	28-Jan-08	0

FE Weekend: Where Next for Apprenticeships?

Friday 13th July **TO** Saturday 14th July
AT Morley College, London

FE Week proudly presents FE Weekend

FE Weekend is an inaugural summer conference organised by FE Week, which will provide an opportunity for attendees, from across the sector and at all levels, to receive business critical updates on policy developments and to discuss future changes to further education.

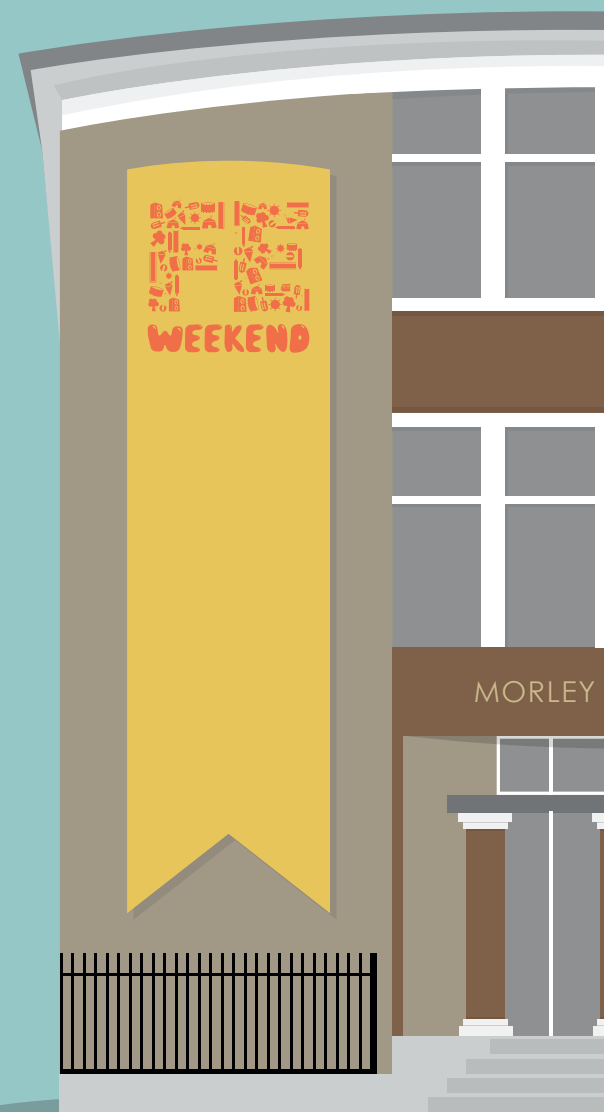
This year's FE Weekend is focussed on apprenticeships and called: **Where next for apprenticeships?**

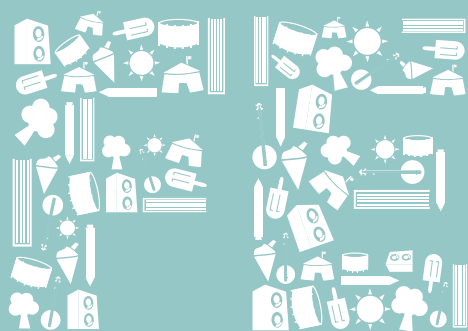
Friday 13th July is aimed at Senior Managers of Colleges, Sector Skills Councils, Government Agencies, Awarding Bodies and other related organisations. Price for attendance is £195 + VAT

Saturday is FREE TO ATTEND and aimed at curriculum staff, trainers, assessors and middle and senior managers in colleges, training providers, awarding bodies, sector skills councils, government agencies and other related organisations.

You can register online at www.feweekend.co.uk to attend just the Friday, just the Saturday (which is free) or for the Friday and the Saturday.

The agenda will be updated during the run up to FE Weekend as new speakers, workshops and plenaries are confirmed. The programme is also subject to change.





WEEKEND



www.feweekend.co.uk

Workshops delivered by:

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FSP Financial Skills
Partnership


skills
cfa

FE Week gets technical

NIACE presented the findings from their annual Adult Participation in Learning Survey during Adult Learners' Week 2012. The slides, provided here, give a breakdown across class, age and year.

Source: www.niace.org.uk/news/challenges-ahead-for-widening-participation-in-adult-learning

1



NIACE Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2012

Dr Fiona Aldridge

niace
promoting adult learning

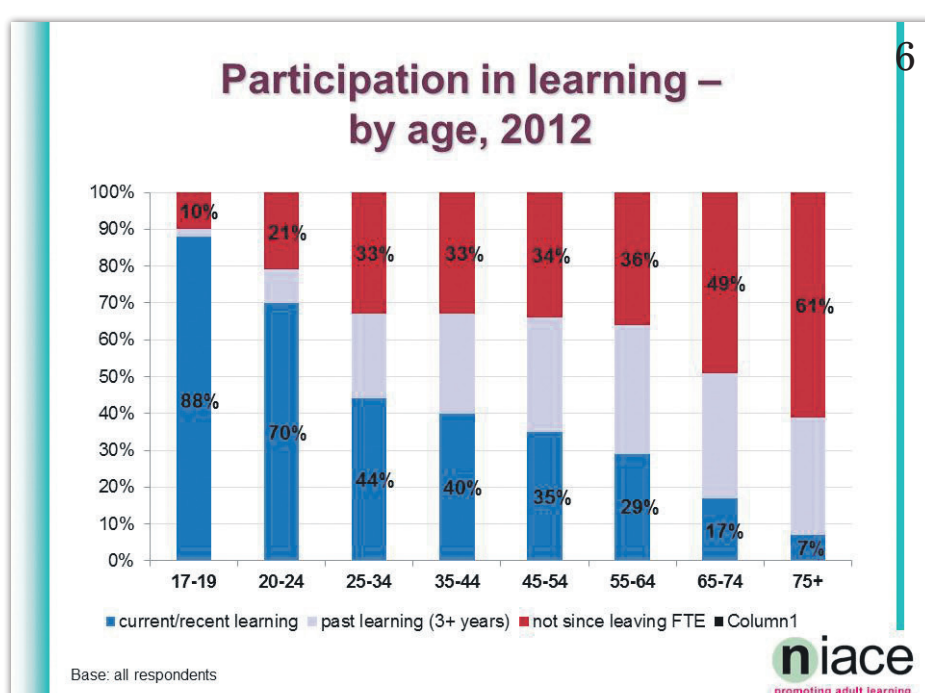
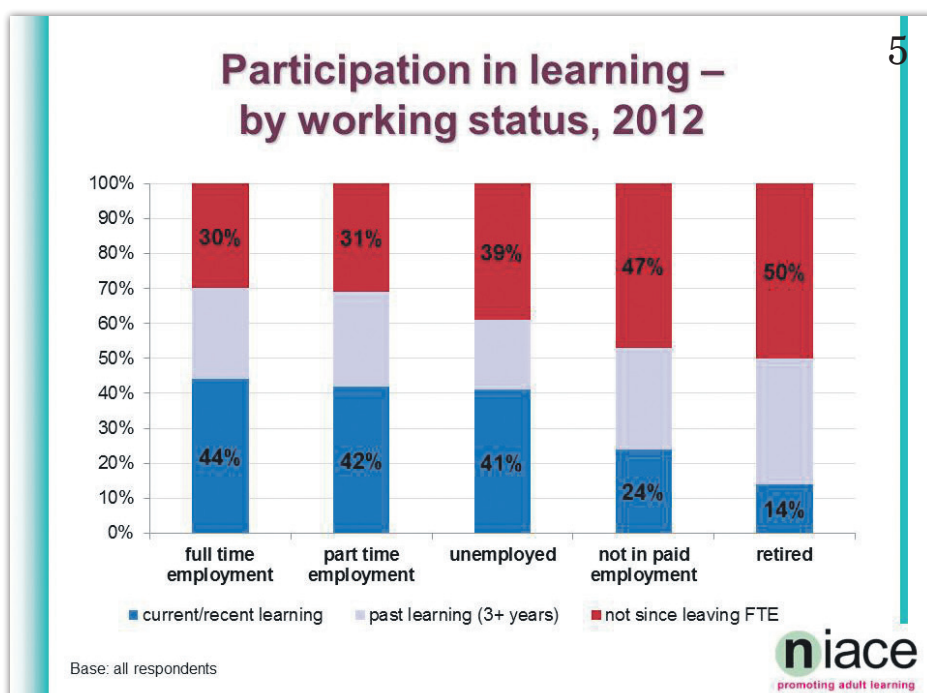
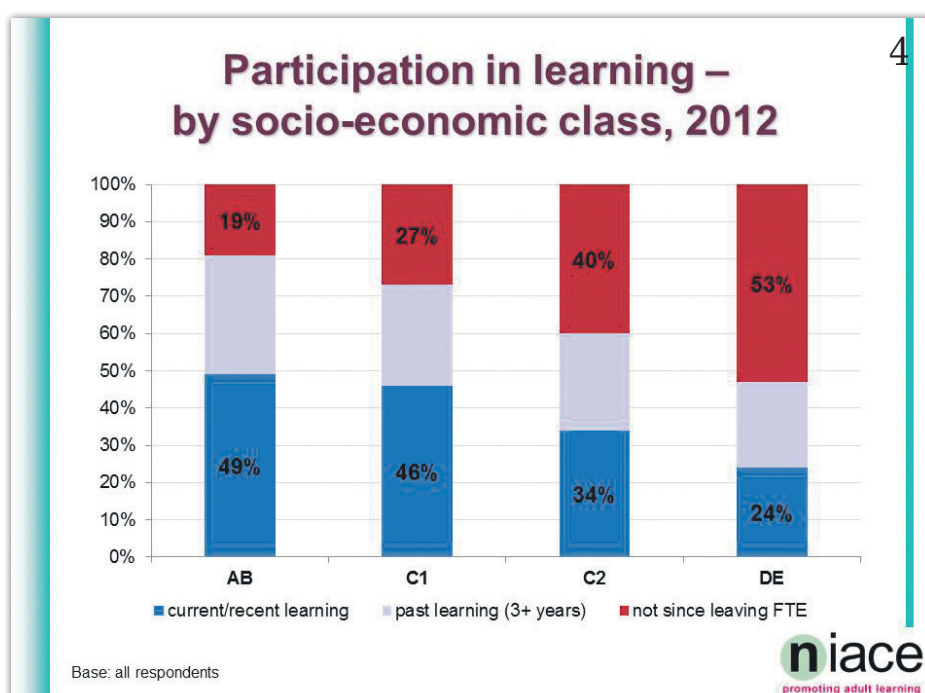
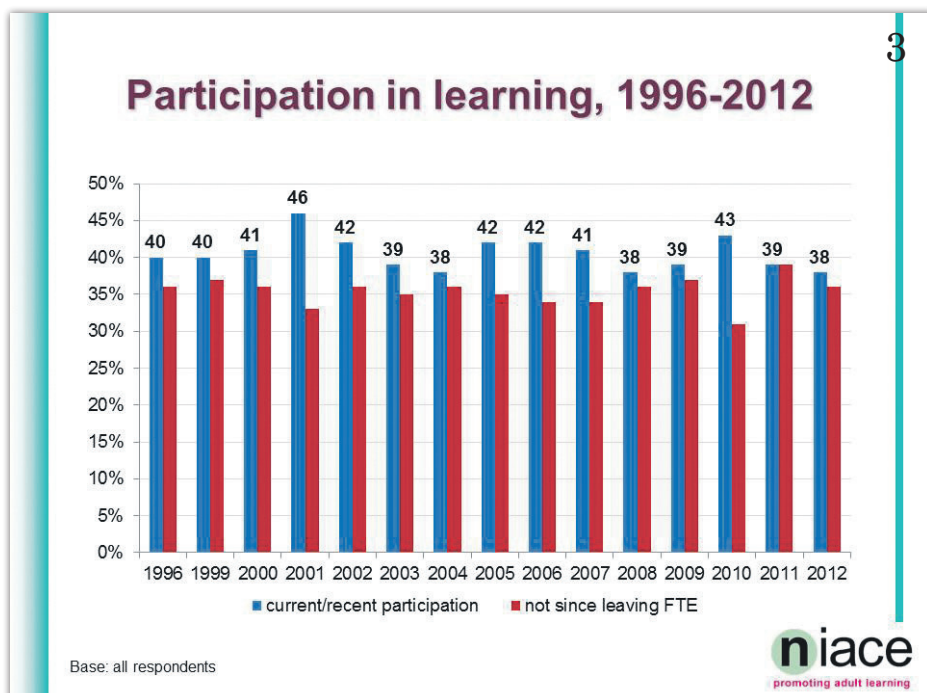
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'Learning can mean practising, studying or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training.

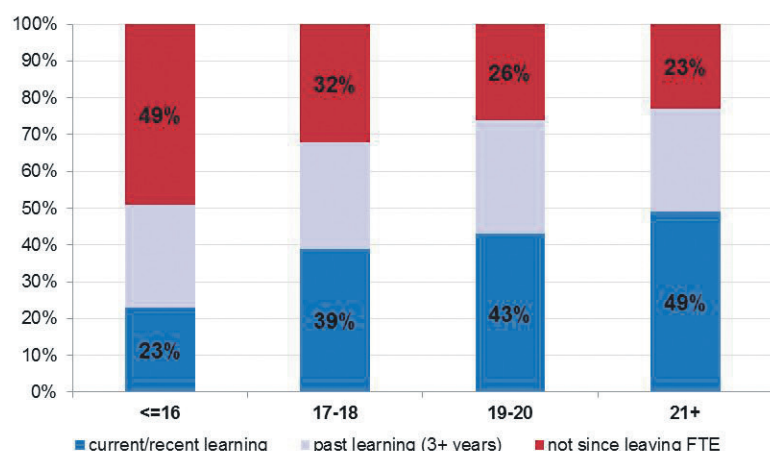
You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full time, or part time, done at home, at work, or in another place like a college.

Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished.'

niace
promoting adult learning



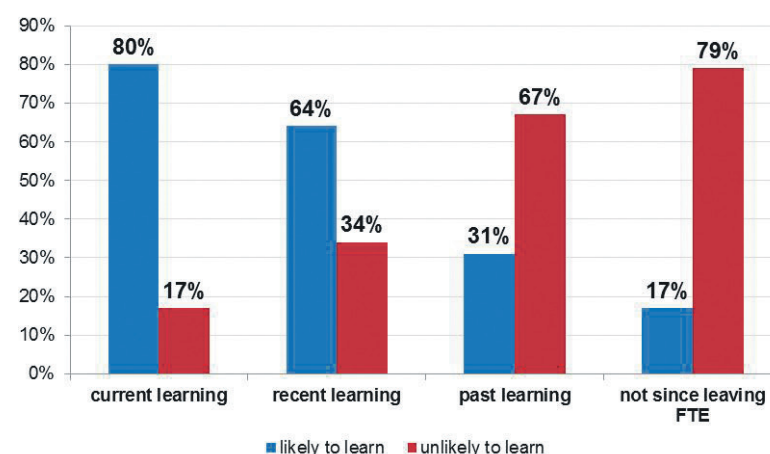
Participation in learning – by terminal age of education, 2012



Base: all respondents

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Future intentions to learn – by learning status, 2012



Base: all respondents

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Motivation for learning – C2 and DE

Group	Main motivation	Relatively more important for this group
C2	Get a recognised qualification Help in current job Personal development Get a paid job Personal interest	Improve self-confidence Employer requirement
DE	Get a paid job Get a recognised qualification Personal development Personal interest Enjoyment of learning	Get a paid job Improve self-confidence Meet people Improve health

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promoting adult learning

Motivation for learning – not employed

Group	Main motivation	Relatively more important for this group
Unemployed	Get a paid job Get a recognised qual Personal development	Get a paid job Get a recognised qualification Improve self confidence
Not in paid employment	Personal development Personal interest Get a paid job	Get an unpaid job Change the type of work I do Support child's schooling Meet people Personal development Improving self confidence
Retired	Personal interest Enjoyment of learning Personal development	Personal interest Enjoyment of learning Improve health Friends/family are also learning

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promoting adult learning

What would make learning more attractive?

- 22% of the learning related to something of interest
- 18% if it led to a qualification which employers recognised
- 17% if I could learn at home
- 16% if my employer would pay the costs
- 14% if I could learn at work

C2s: help from my employer

DEs: learning at or near home; support from others; cost

Not in paid employment: convenience of time and location

Retired: convenience; support from others

Unemployed: wide range of practical help

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promoting adult learning

And finally, for now.....

- 34% of adults would go to the internet first to find out about learning
- 15%: don't know
- 7-8%: FE, HE, library

But, look out for what the survey says about:

- Where adults learn
- Workplace learning
- Employer and union support for learning
- Digital capabilities
- Paying for learning
- Family learning

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FE Week campus round-up



Record breaking Calderdale College student

A former Calderdale College student has become the first athlete to break a world record at the Olympic Stadium in London.

Hannah Cockcroft, who was participating in the women's T54 100m at the Disability Athletics Challenge (DAC), completed the race in 18.56 seconds. However, she had a tough time reaching the venue.

"The bus that was supposed to take us to the stadium crashed, so a load of taxis were ordered

and all the foreign athletes took them," Hannah said.

"We were delayed setting off and, because it was rush hour, it took us two hours to get here.

"We missed the call-up, missed the warm-up and I just had to literally get in my chair and get on the track." Hannah also finished fourth in the T54 women's 400m and last year won gold medals in the 100m and 200m at the world championships in New Zealand.

Hats off to talented Weston College students



Eight textile and design A-level students at Weston College have been selling hair accessories, garters and decorations at a wedding fair in Bridgwater.

Nicola Stent, a textile and design lecturer, who also gained a First Class degree at Weston College, said: "It's a way to use skills they

have developed on their A-level and get them to think about the commercial world in which they are going to eventually work."

The Griffens Carnival Club Wedding Fair, held in Bridgwater and Albion Rugby Club, was open to the public from 11am to 4pm, and also included a fashion show.

TyneMet College run a mile for Sport Relief

Students and staff from TyneMet College have been running the Sport Relief Mile in order to raise money for charity.

Ben Henderson, who is studying the Public Services Extended Diploma at level 3, set the best time by running the distance in 5 minutes and 58 seconds. Meanwhile, Claire Tallentyre set the fastest time for a female student, completing the mile in 7 minutes and 12 seconds.

Chris Bunten, flex fitness gym manager and strength and conditioning coach at TyneMet College, said: "The staff and students at TyneMet were delighted to be able to support and promote Sport Relief and we are very pleased to have raised the amazing amount of £150 to donate to the charity."



St Brendan's Sixth Form College gets new Principal



Michael Jaffrain is the new principal of St Brendan's Sixth Form College, following the retirement of Ann Barrow.

The college says Mr Jaffrain has a wealth of experience in the education sector, having been promoted from the position of assistant principal, and has the "qualities to lead St Brendan's into an exciting new chapter."

Mr Jaffrain says he joined the college because he "was really keen to go back into the Catholic education sector as it has much to offer."

"I also wanted to remain in a specialist Sixth Form College as they provide excellent teaching and learning for post 16.

"St Brendan's fulfilled both roles and has a fantastic reputation".

The college says Mr Jaffrain's strategy over the next few years is "to work closely with students, governors and the community to ensure that teaching and learning gets even better."



MidKent College stroke awareness day

An inspirational MidKent College student held an event to promote stroke awareness earlier this month.

Amber Garland, 21, had to learn to speak again after suffering a stroke in August 2009, and has no memory of her life before it happened.

The art student was joined by representatives from the Stroke Association – a charity of which she is now a volunteer – to help her run the event as part of Action on Stroke Month.

Jane Sedgwick, a spokeswoman for the Stroke Association, said: "I'm absolutely delighted for Amber.

"She has embarked on becoming a volunteer and we thought it would be a great idea if she lost her training wheels and did an event like this so she can get used to being in the spotlight.

"Amber has done very well and the event has attracted a lot of attention, which is obviously what we were hoping for."

Footie star coaches at Middlesbrough College



Former Middlesbrough, Southampton and Darlington star Neil Maddison has a new role after signing on as a coach at Middlesbrough College. The appointment is good news for the College, which is in the process of developing its Sports Academies as part of the new £6.5 million Middlesbrough College Sixth Form Centre – known as MC6. The new MC6 Sixth Form Centre will include a state-of-the-art 4G astro turf pitch along with modern changing facilities which will also be open to the public seven days a week.

Deputy director of sport, Paul Watt, said:

"As well as these qualifications, Neil brings invaluable experience of both playing and coaching professional football. This really gives the students who come to Middlesbrough College the best possible coaching experience alongside their academic commitments."

Josh Keeble, 16, who lives locally in Guisborough and is in his first year of a Level 3 BTEC National Diploma in Sports Coaching and Fitness, said: "Neil really knows what he's doing, he's played the game, he's been a coach and he's been a manager so if he tells you to do something it's very difficult to argue with him."



Myerscough College smash campaign target

Myerscough College has created 151 new apprenticeships placements, smashing their original '100 in 100' days campaign target.

Ann Turner, principal of Myerscough College, said: "Achieving 151 apprenticeships in only 100 days is incredible news.

"It means 151 people have secured a new job and will be trained to achieve a qualification that will hopefully secure them a long-term future.

"For employers it means they have gained

new members of the workforce who will add value for many years to come."

The initiative, launched in January, is part of Myerscough College's yearlong apprenticeship campaign, called "My Apprentice 2012".

The principal added: "This however is not the end of our drive to increase apprenticeships.

"For the remainder of 2012 we will build on the successes of the first 100 days and focus on securing further apprenticeships and opportunities throughout the year."

Canterbury College curate curious collection



Artists from Canterbury College have transformed an empty shop in the Marlowe Arcade into an exciting new art gallery.

The Curious Curator exhibition space, formerly The Discovery Store, will feature paintings, sculptures and installations by BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Art and Design students.

The special four-day show was open to the

public from 10am to 4pm on Saturday, 12 May, to Tuesday, 15 May, as part of the Sounds New Creative Music Festival.

Twelve students helped convert the empty store into a contemporary gallery featuring their work, which is a visual response to the music and themes of the Sounds New festival.

The festival also featured performances by Canterbury College Music and Dance students and others.

City of Wolverhampton College is in bloom

Students from City of Wolverhampton College have entered show gardens into the Birmingham Borders competition.

The competition will give horticultural students Brian Trubshaw, Phil Simmonds and Gemma Askew the chance to design, plan and build an exhibit in a show environment without the large financial and resource commitment.

Gemma Askew, aged 29, has based her design on her own experiences of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

"The things that are important to me are the numbers three and five, and symmetry, so that is reflected in my design," she said.

The competition will be held at the NEC from June 13 to 17.

Darren Rudge, a lecturer at City of Wolverhampton College, said: "The students



are all very excited about showcasing their work in front of the thousands of people that visit the show, and have come up with some really exciting designs."

Strode College's make-up masterpieces



Beauty therapy students at Strode College have been showing off their creative flair and technical make-up skills by creating movie character looks.

The students worked in pairs, one as model and one as make-up artist, to put together a total look including make-up, hair, nails and clothes for an annual competition at the college.

Marcie Mickleburgh, course manager for level 2 beauty and therapy students, told FE Week: "The students have two and a half hours,

and it is timed very strictly.

"Three judges then come round and take about 15 minutes to decide before going off and having a chat, coming back and announcing the winners."

From Strode's Level 2 beauty therapy Course, first prize went to 'Black Swan', modelled by Sophie Farmer from Somerton with makeup by Roxy Hannam from West Chinnock, Crewkerne. Second prize went to 'Avatar', modelled by Laura Cobden from Martock, with makeup by Laura Beale from South Petherton.

Green fingered student at Pershore College



A student from Pershore College has been crowned the "Young Horticulturalist of the Year" by the Institute of Horticulture in Edinburgh.

Douglas Mackay, 21, from South Devon, was awarded a £2,000 bursary by the Shropshire Horticultural Society, which will allow him to travel abroad in pursuit of a horticultural career.

"It was a great experience," he said.

"It's just such a fantastic opportunity; it's just been so good to be part of it really."

Mr Mackay now hopes to tour Europe in order to observe food production once he graduates next summer.

Julia Page, assistant principal at the college, said: "We're all really thrilled for Douglas and really pleased that he has been able to show the superb knowledge that he has gained while he has been at Pershore."



South Cheshire College beauty therapy day

Students from South Cheshire College gave carers and service users a day to remember at the Neuromuscular Centre in Winsford.

Level 2 Complementary Therapy students and the level 2 Beauty Therapy group spent a day at the Centre delivering relaxing treatments such as massages, manicures and facials.

Sandra Smith, a complementary therapeutic practice for health and wellbeing foundation

degree lecturer, said she was delighted with the event.

"The students all did themselves proud at the Neuromuscular Centre and those who attended thoroughly enjoyed the experience," she said.

The Centre is a regional charity that provides a combination of services for people with a wide range of neuromuscular conditions from across the country.

FE Week events...

FE loans 'a difficult nettle to grasp'

Holly Welham

@HollyWelham

FE loans were a contentious topic at the conference and skills minister John Hayes addressed concerns in his speech, describing the loans as "a difficult nettle to grasp".

Colleges have expressed fears that the loans will discourage adults considering further education. The sector has criticised the government for not consulting it fully on the change or running a pilot project. People are also worried that there will be too little time to effectively communicate details to potential learners.

Mr Hayes defended his decision, explaining that the loans were a way of protecting the adult learning budget in the current economic climate.

"In an ideal world, we wouldn't be [here]," he said. "If money was limitless, if funds were available to do everything that we want to do, then we wouldn't be [here]."

"But given the choices we made, I'm absolutely sure we took the right option."

Mr Hayes promised that the adult learners' budget will remain protected as long as he has responsibility.

The minister also said that it was "right" that his department has "taken steps toward" the question of "who should contribute to learning and in what form".

In response, the shadow minister Gordon Marsden criticised plans by drawing on conversations he has had with learners and staff at FE colleges across England over the past three months.

"I have heard first hand of their fears of loans of up to £4,000 a year. It's not a negligible sum of money. It will act as a major block for countless adults," Mr Marsden said.

He added: "It's clear that if these loans come in there has to be a very firm dialogue and debate with all stakeholders and groups concerned. And it's not clear to me that this has taken place. Not at all."

The subject of loans was first brought up at the Adult Learners' Week Policy conference by Will Swann, the director of students at The Open University, in relation to higher education.

Part-time students will be able to access loans for tuition fees for the first time later this year.

The change comes after the government redirected higher education funding from grants to loans, dramatically pushing up fees in the process. Mr Swann welcomed the move, but said that it "of course guarantees nothing".

When asked by *FE Week* whether the government has given enough time to make this change, Mr Swann described it as "a little bit hairy".

The Student Loans Company does not open applications for part-time loans until the end of July, but The Open University already has 30,000 students who have registered for degrees.



David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) speaking at the Adult Learners' Week conference

"We may face an interesting cash flow problem this year, but we're working very very closely with the student loans company," said Mr Swann.

"There is a level of uncertainty that we face at the moment which we haven't faced since we were founded in 1969," he added.

The director of students later joked that one unintended consequence of the policy could be that retired people will take advantage of taking out a loan that there is very little chance of them paying back. "I keep my hopes up that way" he quipped.

The critical role adult learning plays in social mobility was referenced in the course of the conference, with biting remarks from Baroness Margaret Sharp of Guildford.

"I have heard first hand of their fears of loans of up to £4,000 a year"

"I don't think Nick Clegg recognises how important adult education is in social mobility," said the Liberal Democrat. The backbencher then attacked further education loans: "I cannot understand why we, as a government, why on earth we are pushing forward with loans for level 3."

"I really think that if we are concerned about social mobility, it's very important that we try to overturn it."



Gordon Marsden, shadow minister for FE



John Hayes, minister for FE



Will Swann, director of students at The Open University and Baroness Sharp of Guildford



Acknowledging adult achievement

Holly Welham

@HollyWelham

TV presenter Philippa Forrester enthusiastically kicked off the ceremony.

"There's a reason for all these balloons, all these candles, all these flowers," said the host.

"This is a celebration. This is a party. This is to say well done. To acknowledge all of that work and the bravery."

This is the 21st year of Adult Learning Week and the chief executive of NIACE, David Hughes, described the ceremony as the "pinnacle" of what happens.

There will be around 4,000 'Have a Go' events across the country and Mr Hughes said the week will give around 100,000 people the opportunity to get back into learning.

"This is a celebration. This is a party. This is to say well done. To acknowledge all of that work and the bravery"



The Adult Learners' Week Awards ceremony took place at the packed out QE2 Conference Centre in Westminster

Congratulatory words from David Cameron were read out by the chief executive. The Prime Minister described adult learning as "part of this country's lifeblood".

Whilst presenting Tomorrow's World, Ms Forrester studied Ecology and Conservation at Birkbeck College in London, and she spoke about the "excitement" of returning to education as an adult.

The Business Secretary Vince Cable similarly drew on personal experiences and

talked about his mother, who left school at 15 to work in a factory packing chocolates.

"The stress of being ambitious and able, but the lack of education opportunity, meant that when I was about 10 or 11, she had a very serious nervous breakdown," he said.

"She eventually put her life together again through adult education, so I shall always be pleasantly indebted to the people who made that possible."

The first winner to be presented with their award was Corina Scanlan-Messam.

After leaving school, which she says she "hated" and gained just two GCSE's at, she became involved in drugs and petty crime.

When she discovered she was pregnant at 21, she said she knew she needed to give her child a "better life" and enrolled at South Cheshire College.

There she completed a Moving On course,

taking only two weeks maternity leave.

She cites the emotional, as well as academic support, given to her by her tutor Alison Fenoglio, as a massive help. She said Ms Fenoglio, who nominated her, is like a "friend".

In September she will begin a degree in Psychology at Keele University with the hope of going on to study a masters in forensic psychology. "I feel like I've set myself free," she said.

Adult Learner Award winner stories

Inspiring words were heard from learners and teachers throughout the ceremony, with 70 individuals and seven organisations presented with awards – here are some of their stories.

Apprentice of the Year

Aysha Bentley, 21, said that thanks to her placement at the De Vere Academy of Hospitality she went "from facing jail and being homeless, to meeting new people, learning skills, having qualifications and committing myself to something I love."

After only 12 weeks of her apprenticeship she won third place at the national De Vere Academy competition. She now has two jobs, working in the kitchen of a pub and a luxury five-star fitness centre.

Outstanding Learner of the Year

Tash Young, 28, left school with two GCSE's and began working in unskilled jobs. She felt unfulfilled and slipped into depression, losing her job and spending the next ten years claiming benefits. Her mother suggested that she tried volunteering. "It was one of the best decisions I have ever made," she said. Having completed a number of courses at the Volunteer Centre Babergh she has been offered a permanent position as an assistant volunteer coordinator with The Befriending Scheme.

National Senior Learner

Alan Markland, 78, worked in the navy for 37 years, but had to leave after being diagnosed with asbestosis. After ending his 15 year struggle with alcoholism he embarked on a degree in Creative Writing at Bolton University. He has published a collection of short stories, completed a novel and is currently working on a play. "I have learned as I have gone and the lessons, often heart-breaking, more often uplifting, continue," said Alan.

Learning Works award

Karen King, 42, found working as a carpenter in a male-dominated environment a challenge, with her uniform not fitting and problems accessing toilets when off-site. She joined the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) to find out about her rights and then took courses to become a health and safety representative. This led to her teaching sessions on the subject and she is now also a UCATT Learning Rep. "These achievements have transformed my life," she said.

B Bradford College

Bradford College is recruiting for two senior management posts. The College has been delivering quality education and training for over 175 years. Each year we deliver hundreds of courses to over 23,000 learners, from across the globe. The College is the fourth largest in the country and the largest provider of higher education outside of the university sector in England.

Both postholders will be a member of the College's Leadership Team. Through membership of the Leadership team, the successful candidates will make a major contribution to the College's strategic planning and strategy implementation, primarily in those areas assigned to the postholder's responsibility. The postholder will also be expected to support all other aspects of College activity.

Director of Student Services

£60,514 per annum Job Ref: 12067

The College has established a very broad curriculum base of further education and higher education, with targeted provision servicing the needs of young people, adults, employment, business and the local community. The importance of ensuring high quality support and direction for students is a major priority.

The postholder is expected to contribute to the College's strategies for building on this base. The appointee will make a significant contribution to the development of the College culture to put students first.

The postholder will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification along with a proven track record of managing Post 16 student/customer services within an educational setting. Previous experience of managing budgets and the ability to communicate with, lead, motivate and encourage individuals and teams is essential. You must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the range of support funds available to students and current legislation relevant to learner services. The postholder will have the ability to develop and implement marketing strategies for student recruitment as well as a demonstrable commitment to deliver equality and diversity. The College provides a comprehensive range of courses to students studying further and higher education so knowledge of both sectors will be essential.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced Senior Manager in all areas of student support to make an impact within a dynamic organisation

If you would like the opportunity to have an informal discussion about the post, please contact **Andy Welsh** on **01274 433011**.

A disclosure check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be undertaken for this post.

Closing date: 12 NOON 6 June 2012 | **Interviews to be held on 20 and 21 June 2012**

Assistant Principal Adult Skills

£67,750 per annum Job Ref: 12068

The successful candidate will take specific responsibility for developing the strategy for adult training and education in the college's vocational and community programme areas. A major part of the role is the performance management of the adult curriculum to continue to maintain and improve on the very high quality as well as building capacity with local partners and through other national initiatives.

The postholder will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification and a teaching qualification along with significant leadership and management experience in Further Education. A high level of understanding relating to current education policy and regulatory and/or inspection frameworks and an extremely developed understanding of effective and efficient curriculum planning and delivery in further education programmes are also essential. The postholder must be able to demonstrate excellent knowledge of funding methodologies, strategies for efficient management of resources and the diversification of income opportunities and have an exceptional track record in the leadership and management of curriculum, teaching and learning, resource planning and delivering excellent success rates.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced Senior Manager/Leader to make a significant impact within a dynamic organisation.

If you would like the opportunity to have an informal discussion about the post, please contact **Kath Oldale** on **01274 433011**.

A disclosure check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be undertaken for this post.

Closing date: 12 NOON 6 June 2012 | **Interviews to be held on 13 and 14 June 2012**

We're committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expect staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Please visit www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk to view a full job description and complete an online application form. Alternatively email recruit@bradfordcollege.ac.uk stating the Job reference number to obtain an application pack. Please note CVs are not accepted.

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To find out more go to: www.feweek.co.uk

Head of Learner Services

£23,000 - £27,000



Creative Process is a well-established work based learning provider specialising in delivering level 3 apprenticeship training within the Creative and Digital media sectors within the London area.

See www.digital-apprentice.co.uk for more information on the company and its work – we are currently working with market-leading employers such as EMI, C4, Thomson Reuters, ITN and Ogilvy Mather as well as smaller cutting edge start-ups in the creative and digital media sectors.

The company also has good relations with key strategic and funding partners such as NAS and the relevant Sector Skills Councils.

Main Purposes of the Post – briefly.....

Company and Contract Management

- To work as part of the team with other colleagues to deliver the services of the company, attending strategic management meetings and preparing reports

Interfacing with employers

- To conduct all first employer visits after a new apprentice has been recruited including H&S pre-vet visit ensuring all relevant paperwork is completed
- To be the first point of contact with and deal with any employer / learner problems that arise once the learner is on programme

Working with Learners

- To run monthly enrolment sessions for new learners
- To set up and run a tracking system that will monitor learners progress
- To act as the Safeguarding officer and meet with Learners at Risk of not completing
- To meet with and deal with learners and/or employers and try and resolve any issues that arise

The post holder would also be part of the Strategic Management Group and will have the opportunity to participate in shaping the direction of the company.

For full Job Description see <http://www.digital-apprentice.co.uk/blog/category/jobs/> or email andrew@creativeprocess.org.uk . Or ring **Andrew Carmichael** on **0208 691 6729** if you would like to talk informally about this post.



'Does your motivation match our commitment to students?'

**Director of
Student Services and
Achievement**
Salary c.£60-65k

Our Mission intends that all of our students realise their potential and achieve their ambitions, enabling them to succeed in all that they do.

New College Telford is a highly successful and popular Sixth Form College. We are a financially secure and growing business with an increasing regional and national reputation and high aspirations for our students and staff.



As we expand our range of provision and extend the curriculum, we continuously look to enhance our commitment to and our support of students. We are focused fully on the consistent aims of being an inclusive College with impressive success rates, heightened student achievement and 'Outstanding' progression. Support for students has never been a more important feature of the College experience, given external opportunities and our aspirations for our students.

The College is seeking to appoint an inspirational individual with an uncompromising commitment to raising standards and aspirations and improving student outcomes. You will be responsible for ensuring that you put strategies in place to guarantee that the College realises its Vision and Mission. This post provides a real opportunity to play a pivotal role in supporting the new SLT; shaping the future of the College and making a real difference to people's lives. If this sounds like the type of challenge you can embrace then we would love to hear from you.

We are working in partnership with College Leadership Services on this important appointment.

Please contact Helen Anderson for an application pack: handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk or 0115 911 1117, or visit www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp for further information about this post.

The closing date for this post is Friday 1st June 2012. Interviews will be held on Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th June 2012.

College Leadership Services
Expertise in FE



Go to
feweek.
co.uk
for more
listings

ILR Data Officer

(Management Information Systems)

Oaklands are seeking an ILR Data Officer, who has experience working in an FE environment with Individual Learner Records (ILR). The successful candidate will have excellent IT knowledge, with a Level 3 NVQ qualification or equivalent preferred. This role is essential to the progression of the college so accuracy and attention to detail are key qualities that the successful candidate will demonstrate, along with the ability to prioritise workloads, balancing priorities and demands.

Salary £32,196 - £35,178 per annum. 30 days annual leave, pension scheme and many other benefits. This is a permanent, full-time post.

For further information about this post, including a full Job Description please visit our website www.oaklands.ac.uk and visit 'About us' and 'Jobs at Oaklands'.

Closing Date 8th June 2012

This post is subject to an Enhanced CRB Disclosure in line with our Safeguarding Policy and is Exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

www.oaklands.ac.uk



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**DRIVING AMBITION
INSPIRING SUCCESS**

Middlesbrough College is the largest further education provider in the Tees Valley and enjoys an enviable reputation as a high quality provider of education and training. The college is constantly seeking ways to grow, including investing in new buildings, new posts and new curriculum.

The College want to place themselves at the heart of the employer and employment community and are currently recruiting two leadership roles to help fulfil their vision.

Managing Director – Business Development, Innovation and Employability
£47,923 - £55,374

This post is a key investment in the college's ambition to serve employers in the area. A visionary leader is required to develop new income streams, partnerships and contribute significantly to the financial wellbeing of the college. **Ref: 1658872**

Assistant Principal – Finance & Registry
£47,923 - £55,374

An innovative finance leader is required to develop and manage the Finance and Registry functions of the college. You will be a qualified accountant who has knowledge of FE funding methodologies, and will be responsible for the college budget, financial strategy and the submission of all external returns. **Ref: 1657136**

Visit our campaign site to discover more about the college
and how to apply for the these exciting new opportunities
www.hays.co.uk/jobs/midborcol



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college
hays.co.uk

[illegible]

ARTWORK BY DAN DUKE FOR EE WEEK

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

See if you can spot the 10 differences between the two pirate scenes.
Once you think you've spotted all 10, turn the paper upside down to read the answers.

Enjoy!



Answers (changes made to picture on the right): Pirate ship added on horizon, bird in front of sun removed, clump of grass added to sand, patch of sand missing, sea wrinkle missing, wake in front ship missing, pirate top made red, bone missing from scull on hat, flag made red and bigger cloud on far right

FE Week Sudoku challenge

		3	4			6	1	
5	6			3			8	
4			6		7			2
		2	1		4	5		8
	7						3	
1		9	3		8	4		
9			5		2			3
	4			9			7	6
	8	6			1	9		

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

9								2
1	3				5		9	
			6	4				
	1			9				4
3		7				8		1
8				3			7	
				7	6			
	7		1				8	9
4								6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

1	2	3	6	5	7	8	2	9
8	9	2	4	1	3	7	5	6
6	5	7	8	2	9	3	4	1
7	1	6	9	8	4	5	3	2
5	8	9	1	3	2	4	6	7
2	4	3	7	6	5	9	1	8
9	7	5	2	4	1	6	8	3
4	6	1	3	9	8	2	7	5
3	2	8	5	7	6	1	9	4

Difficulty:
EASY

3	8	5	1	4	9	7	2	6
2	7	4	3	5	6	9	1	8
9	1	6	2	8	7	4	3	5
6	9	1	4	2	5	8	7	3
5	4	7	6	3	8	2	9	1
8	2	3	9	7	1	6	5	4
4	5	2	8	9	3	1	6	7
7	6	8	5	1	2	3	4	9
1	3	9	7	6	4	5	8	2

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



“Mostly this week I have been cutting the grass”

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford